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Letter dated 13 February 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I wish to draw your attention to the latest act of Palestinian terrorism directed against Israel.

Palestinian gunmen from the town of Beit Jala shot Tzahi Sasson, 35, a father of two from Kibbutz Rosh Tzurim, as he drove on the bridge that joins the two Gush Etzion road tunnels on Sunday night. After being shot, Mr. Sasson lost control of his vehicle and crashed into another car, slightly injuring three civilians. As emergency personnel arrived on the scene, Palestinians continued firing on the bridge, forcing the paramedics to put on helmets and flak jackets and treat Mr. Sasson while under fire. Eventually, the medical crew succeeded in transferring Mr. Sasson to the Hadassah University Hospital in Jerusalem, where he later died of his wounds.

The murder of Tzahi Sasson is merely the latest in a series of terrorist attacks, which are fast becoming a near-daily occurrence. These incidents have been detailed in a number of letters over the last several months. I should like to recall my letters dated 9 February 2001 (A/55/777-S/2001/125), 2 February 2001 (A/55/762-S/2001/103), 25 January 2001 (A/55/748-S/2001/81), 23 January 2001 (A/55/742-S/2001/71), 28 December 2000 (A/55/719-S/2000/1252), 22 November 2000 (A/55/641-S/2000/1114), 20 November 2000 (A/55/634-S/2000/1108) and 2 November 2000 (A/55/540-S/2000/1065).

Throughout this violent period and despite signed agreements mandating them to do so, the Palestinian Authority has repeatedly failed to take any steps to halt the violence against Israelis. Moreover, certain Palestinian elements have vowed to escalate the confrontation. Just yesterday morning, the Fatah Movement, Chairman Yasser Arafat's own political faction, issued a statement welcoming the murder of Tzahi Sasson. The statement continued with promises to make the lives of residents of Jerusalem's Gilo neighbourhood a "nightmare" as part of a new stage of the struggle and the escalation of the conflict.

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Such pronouncements, emanating as they do from the circles closest to Chairman Arafat, have elicited no words of condemnation from the Palestinian leadership. Indeed, taken as part of the Palestinian Authority's overall behaviour over the course of the last several months, today's statement appears to conform with the tactics recently employed by the Palestinians. For months, the Palestinian leadership have incited their people to violence through their official media outlets, have refused to issue any statement calling for an end to attacks on innocent civilians and have failed to mobilize the Palestinian security forces to control terrorist organizations.

Consequently, terrorists have enjoyed tremendous freedom to plan and carry out attacks against Israelis as they travel on roads, walk in the streets and use public transportation. This represents a flagrant violation of Chairman Arafat's written commitment of 9 September 1993 to renounce the use of violence and terrorism and to control all elements under his authority that seek to employ such means. As such, it appears that there is a division of labour between the Palestinian political leadership on the one hand and the illegal militias and terrorist groups on the other. While the former engages in negotiations with Israel, the latter perpetrates terrorism and violence which tarnish the very spirit of those negotiations. Such duplicitous behaviour is intolerable and undermines the cause of peace. Israel again calls upon the Palestinian leadership to abide by its repeated legal undertakings in the agreements concluded with Israel.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly under agenda item 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Yehuda **Lancry**
Permanent Representative